

Kateryna Stepanenko, a Russia Analyst, works at her desk at the Institute for the Study of War, Wednesday, Jan. 11, 2023, in Washington.

Associated Press

U.S. spies lag rivals in seizing on data hiding in plain sight

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — As alarms began to go off globally about a novel coronavirus spreading in China, officials in Washington turned to the intelligence agencies for insights about the threat the virus posed to America. But the most useful early warnings came not from spies or intercepts, according to a recent congressional review of classified reports from December 2019 and January 2020. Officials were instead relying on public reporting, diplomatic cables and analysis from medical experts —

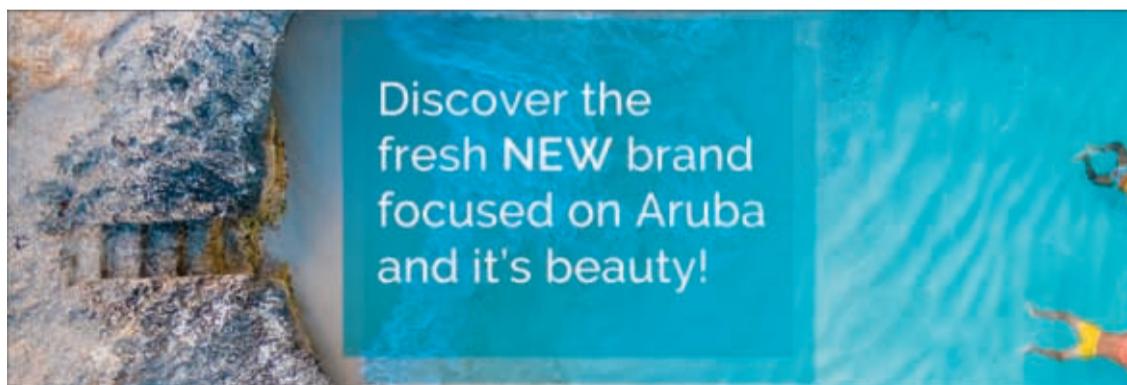
some examples of so-called open source intelligence, or OSINT. Predicting the next pandemic or the next government to fall will require better use of open source material, the review found. "There is little indication that the Intelligence Community's exquisite collection capabilities were generating information that was valuable to policymakers," wrote the authors of the review, conducted by Democrats on the House Intelligence Committee.

Continued on Page 2



Alysha Boekhoudt:
"Life is a beautiful gift, use this opportunity to create the life you deserve"

Colegio San Hose elementary school celebrates its 83-year anniversary



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U.S. spies lag rivals in seizing on data hiding in plain sight

Continued from Front

That echoes what many current and former intelligence officials are increasingly warning: The \$90 billion U.S. spy apparatus is falling behind because it has not embraced collecting open-source intelligence as adversaries including China ramp up their efforts. This doesn't diminish the importance of traditional intelligence. Spy agencies have unique powers to penetrate global communications and cultivate agents. They scored a high-profile success when the Biden administration publicized ultimately correct intelligence findings that Russian President Vladimir Putin intended to invade Ukraine.

But officials and experts worry that the U.S. hasn't invested enough people or money in analyzing publicly available data or taking advantage of advanced technologies that can yield critical insights. Commercial satellite imagery, social media and other online data have given private companies and independent analysts new powers to reveal official secrets. And China is known to have stolen or acquired control over huge amounts of data on Americans, with growing concerns in Washington about Beijing's influence over widely used apps like TikTok.

"Open source is really a bellwether for whether the intelligence community can protect the country," said Kristin Wood, a former senior official at the CIA who is now chief executive at the Grist Mill Exchange, a commercial data platform. "We collectively as a nation aren't preparing a defense for the ammunition that our adversaries are stockpiling."

Intelligence agencies face several obstacles to using open source intelligence. Some are technological. Officers working on classified networks are often not able to easily access the unclassified internet or open data sources, for example. There are also



George Barros, left, a Geospatial Analyst on the Russia Team, Kateryna Stepanenko, a Russia Analyst, and Karolina Hird, a Russia Analyst, pose for a photograph at the Institute for the Study of War, Wednesday, Jan. 11, 2023, in Washington.

Associated Press

concerns about civil liberties and protecting First Amendment rights.

But some experts also question whether agencies are held back by a reflexive belief that top-secret information is more valuable. Rep. Jim Himes, a Connecticut Democrat and longtime Intelligence Committee member, said he believed there needed to be "some cultural change inside places like the CIA where people are doing what they're doing for the excitement of stealing critical secrets as opposed to reviewing social media pages."

In one 2017 test held by the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, a human team competed against a computer programmed with algorithms to identify Chinese surface-to-air missile sites using commercial imagery.

Both the humans and the computer identified 90% of the sites, Stanford University professor Amy Zegart wrote in the book "Spies, Lies, and Algorithms," but the computer needed just 42 minutes — and it took the human team 80 times longer. Reports created using commercial satellites, online posts and other open sources — like the daily analyses on Russian and Ukrainian military tactics

published by the Institute for the Study of War — are widely read by lawmakers and intelligence officials.

"There is a lot of open-source capability that the U.S. intelligence community can pretty much rely on to be there," said Frederick Kagan, a senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute who oversees the creation of those reports. "What it needs to do is figure out how to leverage that ecosystem instead of trying to buy it."

Most of the 18 U.S. spy agencies have open-source programs, from the CIA's Open Source Enterprise to a 10-person program in the Department of Homeland Security's intelligence arm. But top officials acknowledge there isn't consistency across those programs in how they analyze open-source information or how they use and share it.

"We're not paying enough attention to each other and so we're not learning the lessons that different parts of the (intelligence community) are learning, and we're not scaling solutions," said Avril Haines, the U.S. director of national intelligence, at an industry event last year sponsored by the Potomac Officers Club. "And we're not taking advantage of some of the outside expertise and

information and work that could be taken advantage of."

The Open Source Enterprise headquartered at the CIA is the successor to the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, where for generations employees monitored broadcasts to translate them for analysts.

Much of that work was transformed in the last decade. Where people once had to travel long distances to pick up tapes of radio broadcasts in remote places or areas where Americans weren't welcome, sensors now transmit more signals automatically. And machine translation has largely taken the place of people who had to listen to the tapes and transcribe them.

But officials acknowledge they have to do more.

Haines has begun multiple open-source reviews since becoming director of national intelligence and is expected to finalize recommendations this year. Some people involved in those reviews have suggested that the Open Source Enterprise no longer be designated as leading OSINT efforts across the spy agencies, said people familiar with the reviews who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss internal government deliberations.

Three people familiar with Open Source Enterprise say the center had cut its budget for multiple years running prior to last year. They argue that's a sign that open-source work has not always been prioritized at a consistent level.

The CIA recently appointed new leadership for the Open Source Enterprise and in 2021 created a "mission center" dedicated to technology.

"We recognize the importance of open source is only growing as the sheer volume of data openly available increases," the agency said in a statement. "CIA is working not just to keep pace with this trend, but to get ahead of it — and ahead of our adversaries who also utilize open-source information."

There's no consensus on whether the U.S. should create a new open-source agency or center. Supporters say a new organization could focus on adopting advanced technologies and creating more useful products, while opponents question whether it would be unnecessary bloat and take away resources from other agencies.

Carmen Medina, a retired CIA deputy director of intelligence, now studies how spy agencies can incorporate outside ideas and encourage employees to be more creative and intuitive. She suggests a pilot program in which a cell of open-source analysts would compete for a number of years against the regular output of people with top-secret clearances. Medina and others who have worked in top positions and briefed White House officials think that on most days, an open-source group would be competitive and might even produce better analysis using information that's broadly available.

"You can't make sense of the world today by just packaging tidbits," she said. "I've come to believe that almost all of the time, the open source way of thinking about it is correct." □

U.S. kindergarten vaccination rate dropped again, data shows

By MIKE STOBBE
AP Medical Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Vaccination rates for U.S. kindergartners dropped again last year, and federal officials are starting a new campaign to try to bring them up.

Usually, 94% to 95% of kindergartners are vaccinated against measles, tetanus and certain other diseases. The vaccination rates dropped below 94% in the 2020-2021 school year, during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic.

A Centers for Disease Control and Prevention study released Thursday found rates dropped again in the 2021-2022 school year, to about 93%.

The pandemic disrupted vaccinations and other routine health care for children, and also taxed the ability of school administrators and nurses to track which children weren't up-to-date on shots. CDC officials said decreased confidence in vaccines is another likely contributor.

"I think it's a combination of all those things," said Dr. Georgina Peacock, director of CDC's immunization division.

Health officials focus on kindergarten because it's when most children enter school systems. Public schools typically require vaccinations as a condi-



Socially distanced kindergarten students wait for their parents to pick them up on the first day of in-person learning at Maurice Sendak Elementary School on April 13, 2021, in Los Angeles.

Associated Press

tion of attendance, though some exemptions are allowed.

Such exemptions were up slightly last school year, but the CDC's Shannon Stokley said they are not the main driver of the decrease. Rather, more schools relaxed their policies to allow enrollment while giving families a grace period to get shots, she said.

The new numbers suggest that as many as 275,000 kindergartners lack full vaccine protection.

Falling vaccination rates open the door to outbreaks

of diseases once thought to be in the rearview mirror, experts say. They point to a case of paralytic polio reported last year in New York, and to recent measles surges in Minnesota and Ohio.

Those outbreaks coincide with anecdotal and survey information suggesting more parents are questioning bedrock childhood vaccines long celebrated as public health success stories.

A Kaiser Family Foundation poll last month found less support among parents

for school vaccine requirements vs. a 2019 survey.

"It's crazy. There's so much work to be done," said Dr. Jason Newland, a pediatric infectious diseases doctor at St. Louis Children's Hospital and vice chair for community health at Washington University.

Other physicians have told him that more parents are being selective about which vaccines to give their kids. CDC data reflected that: The chickenpox vaccination rate fell more sharply than the rate for shots against measles,

mumps and rubella. This week, the CDC launched a campaign called "Let's RISE" an acronym for Routine Immunizations on Schedule for Everyone. It includes new educational materials to help doctors talk to families about vaccinations, as well as information for families who have questions about the shots.

Building trust in vaccinations "is something that has to happen at the local and community level," Peacock said.

Thursday's CDC study was based on public school kindergarten vaccination reports from 49 states, and reporting on private schools from 48 states. Montana did not report data.

Rates vary across the country. CDC officials noted significant increases in a few states, including Hawaii, Maine, Maryland and Wyoming. But most states saw declines, with the largest drops in Mississippi, Georgia and Wisconsin.

A second CDC report on Thursday found overall vaccination rates among younger children remained high and stable, although there were declines among kids who were poor and lived in rural areas. The report was based on a 2021 national telephone survey of parents of children who were about 2 years old. □

Trump to hold 1st public campaign event in South Carolina

By MEG KINNARD
Associated Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) — Former President Donald Trump is planning to hold the first public campaign event of his 2024 White House bid in the early-voting state of South Carolina. Campaign spokesperson Steven Cheung told The Associated Press on Thursday that Trump will visit South Carolina later this month. No other details were immediately announced. Since announcing his latest presidential run in November, Trump has limited his

public campaign appearances to events at his Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida before an invited crowd or in a virtual setting.

The South Carolina visit, first reported by Politico, comes as Trump's campaign has faced criticism, even among some longtime allies, for its low profile since the announcement.

Trump remained popular in South Carolina throughout his term in office after his decisive 2016 primary victory in the state helped cement his status atop a wide field of rivals. Heading

into the 2024 campaign, it's unclear how broad his support is in the state, although he has at least one high-level backer among the South Carolina's GOP leadership.

The night that Trump announced his 2024 bid, South Carolina Gov. Henry McMaster — who, as lieutenant governor in 2016 was the first statewide-elected official in the country to endorse Trump — said he would again support the former president.

A spokesman for McMaster's campaign didn't im-



Former President Donald Trump announces a third run for president as he speaks at Mar-a-Lago in Palm Beach, Fla., Nov. 15, 2022.

Associated Press

mediately return a message Thursday regarding whether the governor would attend Trump's event or was part of the planning for it. The governor's spokesman said he would wait for an official announcement from the Trump campaign to comment. □

'Dangerous' Alabama tornado slams buildings, uproots trees

SELMA, Ala. (AP) — A giant, swirling storm system billowing across the South spurred a tornado on Thursday that shredded the walls of homes, toppled roofs and uprooted trees in Selma, Alabama, a city etched in the history of the Civil Rights movement.

The "large and extremely dangerous tornado" caused damage as it moved through the historic city, the National Weather Service said.

There were no immediate reports of deaths, but the weather service said there were confirmed reports of tree and structural damage in Selma and reports of damage in other counties. There is damage "all over Selma," former state Sen. Hank Sanders said he has been told.

"A tornado has definitely damaged Selma. In fact, it hit our house, but not head-on. It blew out windows in the bedroom and in the living room. It is raining through the roof in the kitchen," Sanders said.

Malesha McVay drove parallel to the tornado with her family. She says it got less than a mile from her home before suddenly turning.

"We stopped and we



Fallen trees are seen in the aftermath of severe weather, Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023, in Selma, Ala.

Associated Press

prayed. We followed it and prayed," she said. "It was a 100% God thing that it turned right before it hit my house." She took video of the giant twister, which would turn black as it swept away home after home. "It would hit a house and black smoke would swirl up," she said. "It was very terrifying."

Selma, a city of about

18,000 residents, is about 50 miles (80 kilometers) west of the Alabama capital city of Montgomery.

Selma was a flashpoint of the Civil Rights movement. Alabama state troopers viciously attacked Black people advocating for voting rights as they marched across the Edmund Pettus Bridge on March 7, 1965. Among those beaten by

law officers was John Lewis, whose skull was fractured. He went on to a long and distinguished career as a U.S. congressman.

Selma Mayor James Perkins told WSFA that least one person was believed trapped in a building on Broad Street and possibly one other person is missing. There are multiple downed powerlines, and it is consid-

ered an emergency situation.

The outer skin of a two-story building was shredded by the storm, photos from The Selma Times-Journal showed. Huge pieces of insulation and metal were wrapped around the trunk of a tree, and fallen tree branches obscured a sign that proclaims "WELCOME TO HISTORIC SELMA."

The weather service had issued a tornado emergency for several counties just north of the capital city of Montgomery as the same storm system moved eastward. "This is a life-threatening situation. Take shelter immediately," the Weather Service said of the reported tornado.

There were multiple tornado warnings issued Thursday in Alabama, Mississippi and Tennessee as the storm system moved through the region. In Kentucky, the National Weather Service in Louisville confirmed that an EF-1 tornado struck Mercer County and said crews were surveying damage in a handful of other counties. There were reports of downed trees, power outages and other scattered damage from storms that moved through the state. □



Flight status boards show delayed and cancelled flights at Harry Reid International Airport, Wednesday, Jan. 11, 2023, in Las Vegas.

Associated Press

By DAVID KOENIG
AP Airlines Writer

U.S. air travel returned mostly to normal Thursday, a day after a computer system that sends safety information to pilots broke down and grounded traffic from coast to coast.

By early afternoon on the East Coast, about 100 flights had been canceled and 1,700 delayed—much lower figures than on Wednesday, when more than 1,300 flights were scrubbed and 11,000 delayed.

Attention turned to the

U.S. air travel returns to normal after technology breakdown

federal agency whose technology failure inconvenienced millions of travelers. The Federal Aviation Administration said a damaged database file appeared to have caused the outage in the safety-alert system. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg promised a thorough examination to avoid another major failure.

"Our immediate focus is technical — understanding exactly how this happened, why the redundancies and the backups that were built into the system were not able to prevent the level of disruption that we saw," Buttigieg told reporters.

Buttigieg said there was no

indication that the outage was caused by a cyberattack but that officials would not rule that out either until they know more.

The FAA did not immediately respond to questions about the damaged database. The massive disruption was the latest black eye for the agency, which has traded blame with airlines over who is inconveniencing passengers more. Critics, including airline and tourism leaders, say the agency has been underfunded and needs to modernize its technology. "Investment is going to be required, no doubt," American Airlines CEO Robert Isom told CNBC. "It's going to be billions of dollars, and

it's not something that is done overnight."

United Airlines CEO Scott Kirby has been critical of the FAA on a variety of issues, including staffing of air traffic controllers. He says the agency makes "a heroic effort" and does well most of the time but can be overwhelmed during busy travel times.

Rep. Rick Larsen of Washington state, the top Democrat on a House aviation subcommittee, said the outage raises questions "about the current state of the technology infrastructure at the FAA." He told CNN that Congress would consider whether the agency needs more money to modernize. □

Rights group: Litany of crises in 2022 but also good signs

By EDNA TARIGAN and DAVID RISING

Associated Press

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP)

— Widespread opposition to Russia's invasion of Ukraine demonstrates the strength of a unified response against human rights abuses, and there are signs that power is shifting as people take to the streets to demonstrate their dissatisfaction in Iran, China and elsewhere, a leading rights group said Thursday. A "litany of human rights crises" emerged in 2022, but the year also presented new opportunities to strengthen protections against violations, Human Rights Watch said in its annual world report on human rights conditions in more than 100 countries and territories.

"After years of piecemeal and often half-hearted efforts on behalf of civilians under threat in places including Yemen, Afghanistan, and South Sudan, the world's mobilization around Ukraine reminds us of the extraordinary potential when governments realize their human rights responsibilities on a global scale," the group's acting executive director, Tirana Hassan, said in the preface to the 712-page report.

"All governments should



Relatives of soldiers from the Azov Regiment and protesters hold banners against Russia in Lviv, Ukraine, on Aug. 18, 2022.

Associated Press

bring the same spirit of solidarity to the multitude of human rights crises around the globe, and not just when it suits their interests," she said.

Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, a broad group of nations imposed wide-ranging sanctions while rallying to Kyiv's support, while the United Nations Human Rights Council and the International Criminal Court both opened investigations into abuses, HRW said.

Countries now need to ask themselves what might

have happened if they had taken such measures after Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014, or applied the lessons elsewhere like Ethiopia, where two years of armed conflict has contributed to one of the world's worst humanitarian crises, Hassan said.

"Governments and the U.N. have condemned the summary killings, widespread sexual violence and pillage, but have done little else," she said of the situation in Ethiopia, where Tigray forces signed an agreement

with the government late last year in hope of ending the conflict.

The New York-based organization highlighted the demonstrations in Iran that erupted in mid-September when Mahsa Amini died after being arrested by the country's morality police for allegedly violating the Islamic Republic's strict dress code, as well as protests in Sri Lanka that forced the government of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa to resign, and the democratic election in Brazil of

President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva over far-right Jair Bolsonaro.

"Courageous people time and again still take extraordinary risks to take to the streets, even in places like Afghanistan and China, to stand up for their rights," HRW's Asia director Elaine Pearson told reporters at the report's launch in Jakarta.

In China, Human Rights Watch said the U.N. and others' increased focus on the treatment of Uyghurs and Turkic Muslims in the Xinjiang region has "put Beijing on the defensive" internationally, while domestic protests against the government's "zero-COVID" strategy also included broader criticism of President Xi Jinping's rule.

As many Western governments turn away from China on trade toward India, however, Pearson admonished them not to ignore Prime Minister Narendra Modi's own human rights record.

"India, under Prime Minister Modi, has also seen very similar abuses, the systematic discrimination against religious minorities, especially Muslims, the stifling of political dissent, the use of technology to suppress free expression and tighten its grip on power." □

EU court: Tourists may get refunds over COVID measures

BERLIN (AP) — Travelers whose package tours were ruined by the imposition of restrictions to combat the COVID-19 pandemic may be entitled to at least a partial refund, the European Union's highest court said Thursday. The European Court of Justice weighed in after being asked for its opinion by a court in Germany. The Munich court is considering the case of two people who bought a two-week package vacation for the Spanish island of Gran Canaria starting on March 13, 2020, just as the pandemic hit Europe. They are seeking a 70% reduc-

tion in the price because of restrictions that were imposed there two days later and their early return.

When the restrictions were imposed on March 15, beaches were closed, a curfew put in place and the plaintiffs were allowed to leave their hotel room only to eat, the EU court said. On March 18, they were told to be ready to leave at any moment, and two days after that they had to return to Germany. The tour operator refused the requested reduction on the grounds that it couldn't be held liable for a "general life risk."

The EU court found that "a traveler is entitled to a reduction in the price of his or her package where a lack of conformity of the travel services included in the package is due to restrictions that have been imposed at the travel destination to fight the spread of an infectious disease, such as COVID-19."

It said it doesn't matter if similar restrictions are imposed at the traveler's place of residence or in other countries. The German court will now have to assess whether the restrictions in the specific case at issue "could constitute

failures to perform or improper performances" of the contract by the tour organizer. □



Travelers wait in line outside the terminal building to check in and board flights at Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport, Netherlands, on June 21, 2022.

Associated Press

National Guard sent to Mexico City subway on sabotage worry

MEXICO CITY (AP) — The mayor of Mexico City announced Thursday that 6,060 National Guard officers will be posted in the city's subway system after a series of accidents that officials suggested could be due to sabotage.

Mayor Claudia Sheinbaum said a series of mechanical problems in recent months may have been due to "not normal" causes. Sheinbaum appeared to suggest, but did not say, that it could involve some form of sabotage.

"In recent months, incidents have been occurring that we categorize as not normal," Sheinbaum said, adding that she had asked President Andrés Manuel López Obrador to dispatch the quasi-military National Guard officers and that he agreed.

Sheinbaum said Guard officers would be posted at subway stations "and some other facilities" in the transport system and would be there "for some months." She did not explain how the Guard officers, mostly drawn from the army and assigned to law enforce-



Rescue workers exit the Raza station where two subway trains collided, in Mexico City, Saturday, Jan. 7, 2023.

Associated Press

ment, could help control a situation that appears to be caused by maintenance, design or operational flaws. The Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez human rights center said the announcement "is concerning, because it is obvious that this agency reproduces the military's problems with a lack of transparency and exces-

sive use of force." Accidents on the city's subway have been a recurrent embarrassment for Sheinbaum, who is considered the most likely candidate of López Obrador's Morena party to succeed him in the 2024 elections. Like the president, Sheinbaum often ascribes setbacks to a conservative conspiracy

against her. López Obrador was somewhat more specific, saying the Guard would be there to prevent "provoked," or intentional accidents. "What we want is for there not to be psychosis, for people not to have to worry about some accident in the subway, and that it could have been pro-

voked," the president said. "If they call that militarization or whatever, then we will take responsibility for that," he said.

The latest accident came Saturday, when two subway trains collided in a stretch between stations, killing one person and injuring dozens more. Local media reported there had previously been signaling problems on that stretch of track.

In May 2021, an elevated section of the subway system collapsed, causing 26 deaths and injuring nearly 100 people. An investigation blamed the structural failure on deficiencies in construction, and 10 former officials have been charged with a form of manslaughter, injury and damage to property, but none have been jailed. Poor welding, a lack of maintenance, antiquated electronic systems and the city's frequent earthquakes and soft soil conditions have all been blamed in the past for problems on the subway, but sabotage has never before been seen as a cause. □

Big vs small: EU faces big subsidy rift before facing U.S.

By RAF CASERT and SAMUEL PETREQUIN
Associated Press

KIRUNA, Sweden (AP) — As the European Union thinks about injecting more subsidies into its industry to counter U.S. efforts to ramp up its green technologies sector, fears only increase that the continent's giants will profit at the cost of the small member states.

And if the EU's approval of subsidies to counter the impact of Russia's war in Ukraine are anything to go by, such fears are justified. Sweden, which holds the EU presidency, warned Thursday about the need to preserve a balance to make sure that Germany and France don't strong-arm smaller member states and boost their national powerhouses with billions in subsidies that others simply

don't have.

It would fundamentally threaten the EU's cherished "single market" where all industries from the 27 nations, be they from wealthy

Germany or poorer Bulgaria, can compete as much as possible on an equal footing.

The EU's response to the U.S. subsidies imbedded in



Johan Pehrson, leader of the Liberal Party, Jimmie Åkesson, leader of the Sweden Democrats Party, Ulf Kristersson, leader of the Moderate Party and Ebba Busch, leader of the Christian Democrats arrive for a press conference regarding the formation of the government, at the Parliament in Stockholm, on Oct. 14, 2022.

Associated Press

the \$369 billion Inflation Reduction Act must avoid "a competition on who can provide the most state aid" within the EU, Swedish Industry Minister Ebba Busch said. "We would have a situation where we would distort competition on the internal market, and particularly, disadvantage the smaller states within the union."

The EU member states are already gearing up for precisely that battle when their leaders will meet for a two-day summit in Brussels on Feb. 9-10. For sure, most of the public debate will center on how to confront Washington without unleashing a trans-Atlantic trade war, but among member states, the urge to protect national interests will be at play as well.

Subsidies that member

states can use to counter Washington and keep green industries in Europe are a given and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen has proposed the idea of a European sovereignty fund to support the ecological transition of the bloc's industry. The point will be to make any effort more balanced than the 540 billion euros in state aid specifically approved up to now to allow member states deal with the impact of Russia's war in Ukraine.

Almost half of the approved state aid, or 49.33%, was linked to Germany, while almost a third, or 29.92%, was requested by France. In comparison, southern nations like Italy, with 4.73% and Spain, with 1.86%, injected a lot less into their economies. □

Colegio San Hose elementary school celebrates its 83-year anniversary

On January 11th, Colegio San Hose elementary school celebrated its 83 years of existence. The school's principal, Miss Dyan Croes Caster, spoke to the local press explaining what this celebration means for the school and how the school used to be compared to now.

"Today is a very special day, because Colegio San Hose just marked 83 years of educating our children and leading with respect, discipline and love towards our fellow man", she expressed.

She recalls the time she was going through the history of the school and noticed that around 1950, the school had about 600 students. At the time, it was decided that 45 students in one class would be too crowded, so they branched out to the districts of Paradera and Santa Cruz.

Croes Caster further explained that Colegio San Hose is a multilingual school. This was a part of a then prototypical project that started ten years ago, where the school gives out learning materials and lessons in four different languages. This is something very interesting and important for the children.

She stated that the biggest challenge over the last 83 years have always been the maintenance of the school's population and quality in the education they wish to provide. The financial part, she added, cannot be left out either, for it has not changed in a very long time. It is for this reason that they cannot provide much of new digital materials for the children.

"Any extra support we receive usually comes from our own initiatives, parents who help and other third parties who help us sometimes", she pointed out.

Colegio San Hose currently has 250 students divided into twelve classes, a big team of 22 teachers and volunteers too. "We have a big family and a parents committee who lend a hand when we need it",



she said.

The director highlighted that there is room for improvement, especially in terms of keeping up with the current educational standard. She commented that in traditional schools, mentality about the children's education is different, and many children struggle to express themselves in their own native language nowadays (Dutch is traditionally taught in all schools on the island), though they are allowed to. The difference in Colegio San Hose is that children are not only taught to express themselves in their own native language, but also how to do so in other languages.

Croes Caster indicated that Colegio San Hose started its multilingual project in 2012, along with Colegio Conrado Coronel from the bottom up. "At that time everything was new. The teachers had to work very hard to get materials for their lessons, because there was nothing they could use at the time. There were some methods, but you would have to return these along with your extra materials", the principal stated. The students who started school under this project

are now finishing up high school, and the principle gushed that the results were positive.

"The kids did well in high school. You have to look at it like it's a bank: you deposit so many words in different languages and then you can take it back out when needed", she added.

She explained that the way the system works is first, second and third graders receive lessons in Papiamento, and receive language lessons as separate subjects. Fourth graders start the year with lessons in Papiamento, but switch to Dutch in the second half

of the year. Fifth and sixth graders receive lessons in Dutch. Papiamento in turn is given as a separate subject.

Lastly, Croes Caster indicated that for this celebration, they told the students the school's history. She also expressed her gratitude for those who helped the school reached its 83 years of existence.

"We are thankful for our past principals, past teachers, everyone who have helped us, and the past and current parents committee. To the Aruban community, thank you for supporting Colegio San Hose when we needed it the most!" □



IT'S OFFICIAL! Aruba's Annual Boat Fest 2023 is HAPPENING!



ORANJESTAD — All party lovers, the waiting is OVER! Aruba's biggest beach event of the year, 'Boat Fest', is back! This incredible event of boats, floaties, great music, and partying on the beach is happening on Saturday, January 28th starting at 2 PM at Surfside Beach Bar.

This year's Boat Fest event will be the biggest Aruba's seen in a long time. The day will be packed with activities, awesome DJs,

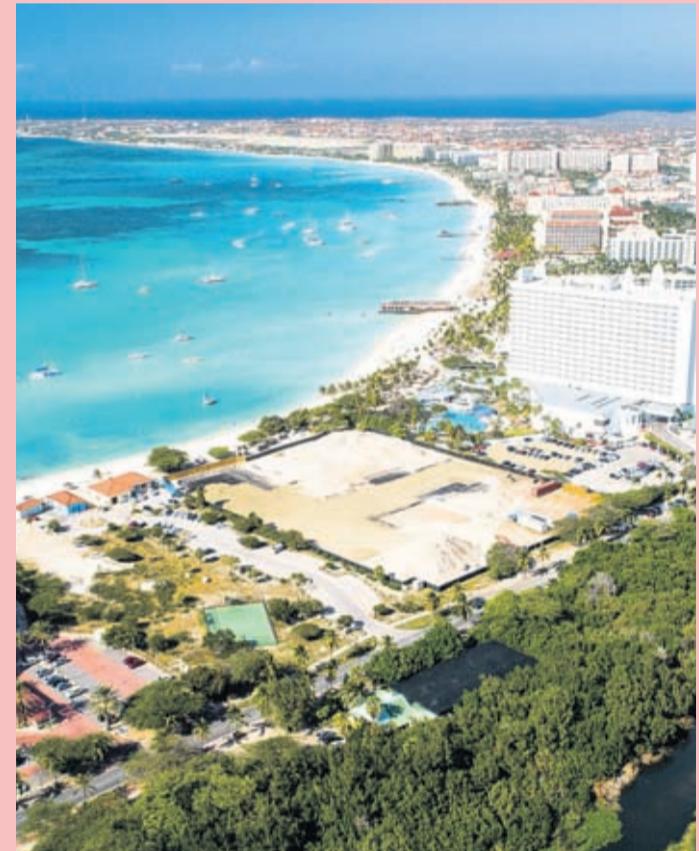
and of course spectacular bucket deals. With a built-up stage in the water, expect LIVE music by Ataniro, DJ Vibes, DJ Sky, DJ Edje and DJ T. MC Tyson will be in charge of making sure everyone is having a great time during this event. To keep the good vibes going, you can enjoy Coronita bucket deals of 6 bottles for 25 florins or 25 bottles for 100 florins.

There will also be a special Coronita Lounge on the

beach for all those looking to cool off while having a unique beach vibe experience. As for Coronita buckets and other beverages, these will be available at different bars located right on the beach. So, grab your floaties, tubes, boats, and let's have a FEST! This event is FREE to the public and is sponsored by Coronita, Moët & Chandon, Hennessy, Fookiu Vodka, and Aperoll. For more information go to www.boatfestaruba.com. □



Aruba to me



ORANJESTAD — You are back or still enjoying your vacation?... we would like to portrait you! By inviting you to send us your favorite vacation picture while enjoying our Happy Island.

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Aruba Tourism Authority honored loyal visitors at Marriot's Aruba Surf Club



The Aruba Tourism Authority recently recognized the Distinguished Ambassadors and Goodwill Ambassadors of Aruba by presenting the Ambassadors with certificates as a token of appreciation for visiting the island for more than 10 and 20 years consecutively.

Honoree was:
Distinguished Ambassadors (10 > years visiting consecutively):



Steven & Ellen Socci resident of New York, United States

Goodwill Ambassadors (20 > years visiting consecutively):

Phil & Kathleen Caiazzo residents of Pennsylvania, United States

Ms. Olga Ruiz representing the Aruba Tourism Authority, and members of the Marriott's Aruba Surf Club

bestowed the certification of the Ambassadors and presented the Ambassadors with gifts, and thanked them on behalf of the Government of Aruba for choosing Aruba as their favorite vacation destination for so many years. The Honorees definitely call Aruba, their home away from home.

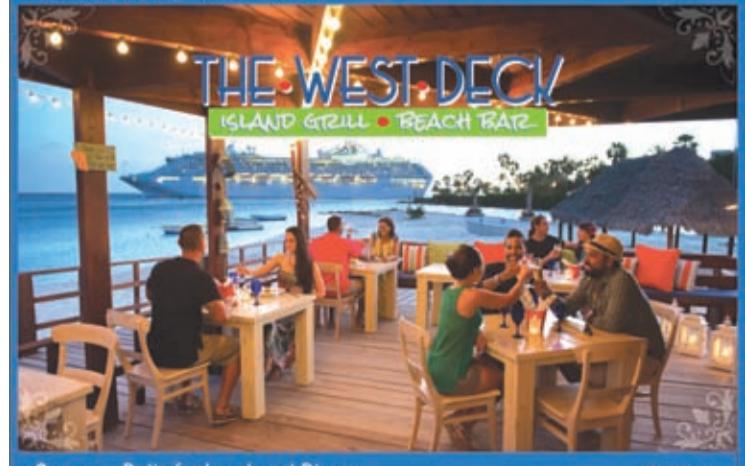
Top reason for returning to Aruba, provided by the honorees were:

Mr. & Mrs. Socci reasons:
Friendly people;
Beautiful weather;
Friendships made over the years;
Amazing beaches;
Exceptional food.

Mr. & Mrs. Caiazzo reasons:
Home away from home;
We love the Aruban people, they are always friendly;
The weather is always perfect;
Excellent restaurants with varied cuisines;
Numerous activities available throughout the island.□



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ORANJESTAD - Exploring the underwater wonders is something you should definitely do during your stay in Aruba. The underwater world has everything to offer that makes a snorkel trip so exceptional; an impressive, colorful sea life with exotic fishes, turtles and beautiful coral reef. The historic shipwrecks, located on the Aruban seabed are also worth a visit. Aruba is known for its white beaches and blue oceans, which means there are many fascinating under water spots, where you can take your snorkeling gear and we selected the top spots for you.

Tres Trapi

Tres Trapi means tree steps in Papiamento, Papiamento is together with Dutch the official language spoken on Aruba. The beach is called Tres Trapi because it is accessible by the tree steps carved into the rocks. Tres Trapi is a small rocky beach, located on the

north-western side of the island, approximately 5 to 10 minute drive from Palm Beach. From the unique steps you can easily walk over the beach into the clear and turquoise blue ocean. While snorkeling you will encounter all kind of tropical fishes and sea stars. The kind of starfish you will find in the Aruban waters is the red cushion sea star. This is a starfish that is commonly found in the shallow waters of the Caribbean sea and if you are lucky during your snorkeling visit to Tres Trapi, you may come across one of the green sea turtles. Respect the animal, keep your distance and enjoy the view. Also remember; it is a once in a life time experience.

Antilla shipwreck

Antilla is a 400-foot-long long ship, built in 1939 in Hamburg, Germany. Antilla came to Aruba, because it had to find a neutral port. When Germany invaded

Aruba's underwater wonderland



the Netherlands on May 10, 1940, the crew decided to let their own ship sink, to prevent it from falling into the hands of the Dutch Navy. Antilla lies on its port-side in Malmok bay, and the sunken word war two ship is now one of Aruba's most popular snorkeling and dive spots. However, the ship wreck can only be reached by boat. The ship is visible from the surface and during your snorkeling trip you be surrounded by hundreds of tropical fishes, but the ship wreck alone is already impressive enough.

Baby Beach

Baby beach; a white beach, with a crystal blue ocean. The beach is located on the southern part of the island. On the way to the famous beach, you will drive through the old

capital of Aruba, San Nicolas. The old Aruban culture can be still felt and experienced here, so do not hesitate to get out of your car and walk around for a while. Baby beach is a child friendly beach, since it is shallow and the water has a pleasant temperature. The name therefore fits well with the beach. Baby beach is an excellent beach for snorkeling, especially if you want to go with small children, because the water remains shallow and there are still many underwater wonders to see. In the ocean there is an area marked until where it is recommended to snorkel and on the beach you will find different facilities. It is a perfect beach to spend your day snorkeling and relaxing.

Mangel Halto

Mangel Halto beach is located in Savaneta, on the southern-west part of the island. The beach is different from the other beaches in Aruba; it is beach full of mangroves. You reach the beach by a bridge through the mangroves and then you will have several entrances to the sea. There are diverse spots where you can enjoy a perfect beach day, wooden stairs made to enter the water and a dock to sit on and enjoy the view. Mangel Halto is also worth a visit for the snorkeling experience. Inside the bay, the water is clear and you find many colorful fish. Outside the bay is a bit more challenging for beginners because of the wind and the waves, but the coral is alive and it is just like snorkel heaven. □



Alysha Boekhoudt: “Life is a beautiful gift, use this opportunity to create the life you deserve”



ORANJESTAD – Alysha Boekhoudt is a young psychologist, who thanks to her passion for helping others and learning more about the human mind, recently founded Wevolve Coaching & Advisory Services. Boekhoudt told our reporter about her childhood, her passion, inspiration, and how all this influenced her to reach where she is now, and practice her dream profession.

Boekhoudt says that she comes from a family of five, and thanks to her family she could enjoy a beautiful childhood. Even though there is much she does not remember, she says, from pictures she has seen, stories she has heard, and the relationships within her family, she feels sure that despite not having a lot of memories, her childhood was beautiful.

She explains that the reason she doesn't remember a lot of her childhood is because she is a person dealing with anxiety. “As far as I can remember, I have dealt with this my entire life. When I was young I was never diagnosed with this, but by studying psychology I began recognizing that I have a

lot of symptoms of anxiety, and I decided to find help”, she says.

Boekhoudt says that she is the type of person who always loved dancing and she always considered dance as a passion, it was even her side job. “When I dance I feel like I can express all the emotions that I don't feel comfortable expressing. What's more, often times I experienced that my emotions come to the surface when I dance. I see this as a very beautiful expressive art.”

Even though she now has graduated in psychology, she points out that this does not mean that studying was something she always liked. She says that when she was younger she was not the best behaved at school, which meant she was held back a year and even had to change schools.

After completing high school, she didn't attend school for two years. Boekhoudt emphasized that during this time, it came to a point where she decided that she was ready to become and act like an adult. “At that moment I decided to go to the United States, at Coastal Carolina University to do my Bachelors

in psychology. I managed to finish my four-year program in three years. I fell in love with psychology and was very determined and excited to learn new things”, she said.

Her passion for psychology took her to FIU in Miami, Florida, where she worked for three months in intensive research with children with ADHD. After graduation, she returned to Aruba and completed her Masters online in Industrial and Organizational Psychology. “I am very lucky that I was able to find a job that I love and that I am good at”, she says.

Boekhoudt emphasizes that her inspiration to study psychology, aside from wanting to help others and not seeing people suffer, what inspired her the most was knowing the mind of a person, her interest in seeing how each mind works differently and what makes each person react different.

Even after more than three years working as a psychologist, she underscores, every case that she takes makes her more and more curious about the mind. “This is my motivation to continue studying so that I can understand and help my clients better.”

Boekhoudt is founder of Wevolve Coaching & Advisory Services. She explains that seeing the amount of people needing help was one of the biggest motivations for her to start her own practice. Despite this, she is a person with a lot of creative ideas to work with foundations and the community of Aruba, and keeping this in mind, working in her own private practice facilitates these possibilities.

“The main goal of Wevolve, as the name suggests, is for us to evolve together. I as a psychologist will provide the tools and together we will reach your goals. Aside from that, Wevolve is not focused only on curative treatment but also preventive treatment. This is why we organize a lot of workshops and talks”, she indicated.

Regarding the future, Boekhoudt pointed out that normally she doesn't like to think so far, but if she has to imagine herself in ten years, she sees a 38 year old woman with a beautiful and happy family. A person who each day does what



makes her happy, and dedicates time to herself and her family.

For Wevolve's future, she sees it as a bigger company having more psychologists working to help more people in need. She adds that she has a lot of interest in working with foundations on the island, and even come up with new projects to help the people. “Plans for the future there are many, but little by little I adapt them and reach my goal.”

Finalizing, Boekhoudt expresses her message for the community: “Life is a beautiful gift that we received. What's more, it is a gift that few of us received. Use this opportunity to create the life you deserve. Believe that you deserve a beautiful life because you really deserve it. There are times when things can go in ways we do not want and we can feel like we cannot handle it on our own. It's okay, we are human. Reach out to your loved ones or contact a psychologist for help. Wevolve's doors are always open. □



CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS 43 Wipe off

1 Mongoose 44 Snowy
foe wader

6 Dark fur 45 Also-ran

11 Bars on
cars 46 Block-
heads12 Makes
sound

13 Swindles

14 Physics
bits15 Pouchlike
part16 Door-
opening
phrase

18 Tick off

19 Puppy
sound20 Sine
qua—21 Goblet
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Red Sea25 Agreeable
answer27 Singer
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28 Harvests

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version33 Curtain
holder34 Saloon
order

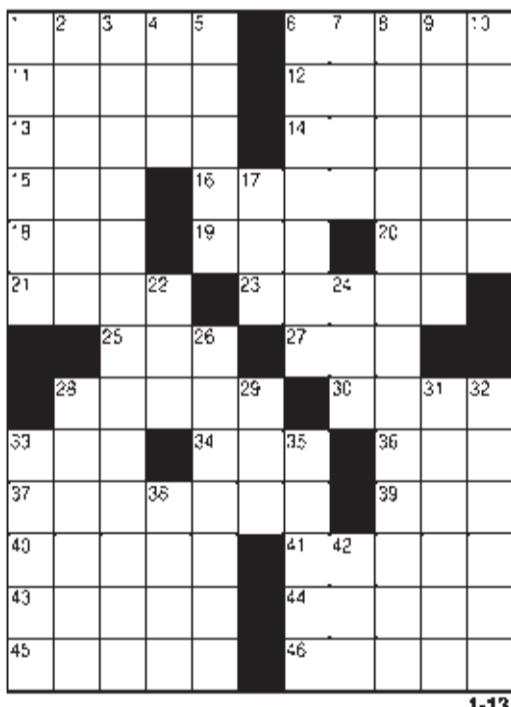
36 — Moines

37 Napoleon,
for one39 Motorist's
buy40 Spa
treatments

41 Poker ploy



Yesterday's answer

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

1-13 CRYPTOQUOTE

KHWA XAPVPQS EGAEWLVSFQEPV
JIHQ'S JPSPALGQP TZPAP KIIW
EFQ NH. SZPK LPAPCK
JPSPALGQP TZPAP KHW VSFAS.

— QGJH BWLPGQ

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: I DON'T KNOW WHERE I'M GOING FROM HERE, BUT I PROMISE I WON'T BORE YOU. — DAVID BOWIE

Can U.S. avoid a recession? As inflation eases, optimism rises

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER
AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — For months, the outlook for the U.S. economy has been a mostly bleak one: Inflation hitting a four-decade high, consumer spending weakening, interest rates surging. Most economists penciled in a recession for 2023.

An economic downturn is still possible. Yet in recent weeks, with inflation showing widespread signs of easing, a more cheerful view has gained traction: Maybe a recession isn't inevitable after all.

One reason for the tentative optimism is evidence that an acceleration in U.S. wages, which has benefitted workers but also heightened inflation, is slowing. Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell has frequently pointed to fast-rising worker pay to explain why the Fed has had to raise interest rates so aggressively. Fed rate hikes, if carried out far enough and long enough, can weaken the economy so much as to trigger a recession.

On Thursday, the government is expected to issue another mild report on inflation, which would boost hopes that the Fed might decide to pause its rate hikes sooner than has been expected. In the meantime, the job market the most important pillar of the economy remains remarkably sturdy. These trends are raising expectations that the Fed might manage to engineer an often-elusive "soft landing," whereby the economy slows but doesn't go into reverse and unemployment rate rises slightly but stays low.

It would still mean painful times for many people. But it wouldn't inflict the widespread unemployment that typically results from a recession.

"All the signs are pointing to a higher, not a lower, probability of a soft landing," said Alan Blinder, a Princeton University economist who formerly served



A hiring sign is displayed at a job agency in Mount Prospect, Ill., Thursday, Jan. 3, 2023.

Associated Press

as vice chair of the Fed. "It may still not be more than 50-50. But 50-50 is looking better than it was a few months ago."

The most positive sign, Blinder said, is the ongoing slowdown in inflation. It has dropped from a peak of 9.1% in June to a still-high 7.1% in November. When the government issues the December inflation report Thursday, economists predict it will show another step down, to 6.5%. On a monthly basis, prices are expected to have remained flat from November to December another encouraging sign.

The inflation slowdown stems from a range of factors, including cheaper gas, the unraveling of supply chain snarls and smaller profit margins among many retailers.

The national average price of a gallon of gas was \$3.27 on Wednesday, far below the \$5 peak in mid-June. Average used car prices, which skyrocketed 37% in 2021, have dropped for five straight months. They're now 3% cheaper

than they were a year ago. Clothing prices have declined in two of the past three months. Furniture prices have dropped for three straight months.

In the meantime, consumers are spending less, forcing many retailers to cut prices to pare their inventories of goods. Online prices have fallen for four straight months from yearago levels, according to Adobe Analytics, particularly for computers, toys and sporting goods.

"The sooner the inflation rate falls," Blinder said, "the sooner the Fed will ease up, and therefore the less the chance of a recession." All that said, there are plenty of threats to a soft landing. As China's economy reopens from its COVID-19 lockdowns, it may start to absorb more of the world's oil supply. That could send U.S. gas prices up again.

And while layoffs remain historically low outside of technology companies, that trend could reverse if businesses become anxious again about the economic outlook. □

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Forest lizards genetically morph to survive life in the city



In this photo courtesy of evolutionary biologist Kristin Winchell, an *Anolis cristatellus* lizard stands on a gate in Rincon, Puerto Rico, Jan. 6, 2018.

Associated Press

By DÁNICA COTO

Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico

(AP) — Lizards that once dwelled in forests but now slink around urban areas have genetically morphed to survive life in the city, researchers have found.

The Puerto Rican crested anole, a brown lizard with a bright orange throat fan, has sprouted special scales to better cling to smooth surfaces like walls and windows and grown larger limbs to sprint across open areas, scientists say.

"We are watching evolution as it's unfolding," said Kristin Winchell, a biology professor at NYU and main author of the study published Monday in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

As urbanization intensifies around the world, it's important to understand how organisms adapt and humans can design cities in ways that support all species, Winchell said.

The study analyzed 96 *Anolis cristatellus* lizards, comparing the genetic

makeup of forest-dwellers to those living in Puerto Rico's capital, San Juan, as well as the northern city of Arecibo and western city of Mayaguez. Scientists found that 33 genes within the lizard genome were repeatedly associated with urbanization.

"You can hardly get closer to a smoking gun!" said Wouter Halfwerk, an evolutionary ecologist and professor at Vrije University Amsterdam who was not involved in the study.

He said he was impressed that the scientists were able to detect such a clear genomic signature of adaptation: "The ultimate goal within the field of urban adaptive evolution is to find evidence for heritable traits and their genomic architecture."

Winchell said the lizards'

physical differences appeared to be mirrored at the genomic level.

"If urban populations are evolving with parallel physical and genomic changes, we may even be able to predict how populations will respond to urbanization just by looking at genetic markers," she said. □



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Marriott Aruba Ocean Club

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1 Bed Ocean front \$16,500
1 Bed Ocean View \$12,000

Marriott Aruba Ocean Club

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Jeff Beck, guitar god who influenced generations, dies at 78

By MARK KENNEDY

AP Entertainment Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Jeff Beck, a guitar virtuoso who pushed the boundaries of blues, jazz and rock 'n' roll, influencing generations of shredders along the way and becoming known as the guitar player's guitar player, has died. He was 78. Beck died Tuesday after "suddenly contracting bacterial meningitis," his representatives said in a statement released Wednesday. The location was not immediately known.

"Jeff was such a nice person and an outstanding iconic, genius guitar player there will never be another Jeff Beck," Tony Iommi, guitarist for Black Sabbath wrote on Twitter among the many tributes.

Beck first came to prominence as a member of the Yardbirds and then went out on his own in a solo career that incorporated hard rock, jazz, funky blues and even opera. He was known for his improvising, love of harmonics and the whammy bar on his preferred guitar, the Fender Stratocaster.

"Jeff Beck is the best guitar player on the planet," Joe Perry, the lead guitarist of Aerosmith, told The New York Times in 2010. "He is head, hands and feet above all the rest of us, with the kind of talent that ap-



Guitarist Jeff Beck performs in concert at Madison Square Garden on Feb. 18, 2010 in New York.

Associated Press

pears only once every generation or two."

Beck was among the rock-guitarist pantheon from the late '60s that included Eric Clapton, Jimmy Page and Jimi Hendrix. Beck won eight Grammy Awards and was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame twice once with the Yardbirds in 1992 and again as a solo artist in 2009. He was ranked fifth in Rolling Stone magazine's list of the "100 Greatest Guitarists of All Time."

"Jeff could channel music from the ethereal," Page tweeted Wednesday.

Beck played guitar with

vocalists as varied as Luciano Pavarotti, Macy Gray, Chrissie Hynde, Joss Stone, Imelda May, Cyndi Lauper, Wynonna Judd, Buddy Guy and Johnny Depp. He made two records with Rod Stewart 1968's "Truth" and 1969's "Beck-Ola" and one with a 64-piece orchestra, "Emotion & Commotion." "I like an element of chaos in music. That feeling is the best thing ever, as long as you don't have too much of it. It's got to be in balance. I just saw Cirque du Soleil, and it struck me as complete organized chaos," he told *Guitar World* in 2014. "If I could turn that into music,

it's not far away from what my ultimate goal would be, which is to delight people with chaos and beauty at the same time."

Beck career highlights include joining with bassist Tim Bogert and drummer Carmine Appice to create the power trio that released "Beck, Bogert and Appice" in 1973, tours with Brian Wilson and Buddy Guy and a tribute album to the late guitarist Les Paul, "Rock 'n' Roll Party (Honoring Les Paul)."

Beck's album credits include "Talking Book," Stevie Wonder's landmark 1972 album. His tenderly

rendered guitar solo on the ballad, "Lookin' For Another Pure Love" won him a warm "Do it Jeff" callout from Wonder that was included on the album cut.

Geoffrey Arnold Beck was born in Surrey, England, and attended Wimbledon Art College. His father was an accountant, and his mother worked in a chocolate factory. As a boy, he built his first instrument, using a cigar box, a picture frame for the neck and string from a radio-controlled toy airplane.

He was in a few bands including *Nightshift* and *The Tridents* before joining the *Yardbirds* in 1965, replacing Clapton but only a year later giving way to Page. During his tenure, the band created the memorable singles "Heart Full of Soul," "I'm a Man" and "Shapes of Things."

Beck's first hit single was 1967's instrumental "Beck's Bolero," which featured future *Led Zeppelin* members Page and John Paul Jones, and The Who drummer Keith Moon.

The Jeff Beck Group — with Stewart singing — was later booked to play the 1969 Woodstock music festival but their appearance was canceled. Beck later said there was unrest in the band.

"I could see the end of the tunnel," he told *Rolling Stone* in 2010. □

Ventimiglia goes from beloved TV dad to debonair grifter

By ALICIA RANCILIO
Associated Press

PASADENA, Calif. (AP) — Milo Ventimiglia was looking to change things up after six seasons on NBC's "This is Us" both physically and professionally.

He found that opportunity with the upcoming ABC series "The Company You Keep," a high-stakes romance story that's a remake of a Korean drama, "My Fellow Citizens."

Ventimiglia plays Charlie, a successful and stylish con artist who needs to pay off a large debt to a dan-

gerous man. He meets a CIA agent named Emma (Catherine Haena Kim). Each tries to keep their identity from the other while their entanglement grows as they face external dangers because of their jobs. Speaking to journalists Wednesday at a biannual event for TV critics, Ventimiglia said it was nice to play someone closer to himself, living in the present day where he could lose Jack Pearson's facial hair and clothes. He relished the opportunity to shave and not "pull my pants up

a little higher because it's the '80s."

"I couldn't just put on a character anymore. I just had to do this and just be myself," he said.

He hasn't completely left "This is Us" behind, though: Ventimiglia, who is also an executive producer on the series, said he brought roughly "90% of the 'This is Us' crew" to work on "The Company You Keep."

The series is also executive produced by Jon M. Chu. It premieres Feb. 19 at 10 p.m. ET. □



This image released by ABC shows Milo Ventimiglia in a scene from his new series "The Company You Keep," premiering Feb. 19.

Associated Press

Study: MLS posts more gains in hiring women for 2022 season

By AARON BEARD

AP Sports Writer

A diversity report examining racial and gender hiring in Major League Soccer reported another boost in scores for the hiring of women, marking a second straight year of significant gains after four years of declines. Thursday's report card from The Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport (TIDES) at Central Florida assigned an overall B-plus grade, with an A for racial hiring and a B for gender hiring. The report examined a range of positions at the league headquarters and within franchises using data from August that covered the 2022 season.

The overall and racial-hiring grades were similar to 2021, but the gender-hiring data stood out for the second straight year.

MLS earned a 69.9 score in that category for 2020, the league's lowest gender score since 2007. But the league jumped to 74.7 points in 2021 (a C letter grade), then jumped another 6.8 percentage points to an 81.2 for this year's report card to extend that positive trajectory another year.

"They had as big of a gain in a particular category as we've seen almost in any



Major League Soccer Commissioner Don Garber speaks during a MLS Season Pass and Apple TV talent announcement at MLS soccer media day in San Jose, Calif., Tuesday, Jan. 10, 2023.

Associated Press

of the Racial and Gender Report Cards in their gender grade," TIDES director and lead report Richard Lapchick said in an interview with The Associated Press, adding: "They've really moved into very positive territory this time."

The league posted an A-minus for gender hiring at its league office in New York, with women filling 40.5% of all positions and women of color filling 19.1%.

At the team level, the league posted C grades

and gains in women working as both vice presidents (28.7%) and in senior administration positions (28.2%) such as assistant general manager or chief legal counsel. The league earned a B grade for gender in professional administration positions, with women filling 37.1% for a gain of 6.5 percentage points. TIDES also evaluated C-suite executive positions — such as chief financial or operating officers — in a separate category that didn't fac-

tor into the league's overall score. MLS earned a B there, with women filling 34.6% of positions for a gain of 5.8 percentage points. Among the racial-hiring categories, the league posted an A for head coaches with people of color filling 35.7% of those positions and an A-minus for assistant coaches (32.1%), though both scores dropped from last year. The league also received an A-plus in league-office positions (43.4%) and players

(61.9%).

The league also received an A-plus for its diversity initiatives under Commissioner Don Garber.

"Most of the notes across the board were really positive," Lapchick said.

In a statement to the AP, Sola Winley — MLS executive vice president and chief diversity, equity and inclusion officer — said those efforts represent "a core value and operating principle" for MLS.

"The progress that our league and clubs are making in racial and gender hiring is intentional and rooted in our aspiration to be a league of choice for a new North America," Winley said. "Sustaining progress is only possible because we have committed leadership and ownership with unequivocal expectations to be among the best leagues in the world."

"As an enterprise our inclusion and impact efforts are focused on effective policy enhancements, a commitment to equitable representation, developing the best talent on and off the pitch, and collaborating with our partners to deepen and broaden the connection with our fans and diverse communities that we call home." □

Bauer released by Los Angeles Dodgers after suspension cut

By RONALD BLUM

AP Baseball Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Trevor Bauer was released Thursday by the Los Angeles Dodgers after the pitcher's unprecedented 324-game suspension over sexual misconduct allegations was reduced by an arbitrator.

Los Angeles designated Bauer for assignment on Jan. 6, the last day to restore him to the roster, after arbitrator Martin Scheinman cut the suspension imposed by baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred from 324 to 194 games. The Dodgers placed the pitcher on waivers Thursday, and any team can claim Bauer

by 1 p.m. EST Friday. Bauer is owed about \$22.5 million from the remainder of his \$102 million, three-year contract, making a waiver claim unlikely. If the 2020 NL Cy Young Award winner is not claimed, any team can sign him after 2 p.m. EST Friday for the major league minimum of \$720,000.

The Dodgers would be responsible for the remainder of the \$22,537,635 he is owed.

The suspension has cost Bauer about \$37.6 million in salary.

Manfred suspended Bauer last April for violating the league's domestic vio-

lence and sexual assault policy after a San Diego woman said he beat and sexually abused her in 2021. Bauer has maintained he did nothing wrong, saying that everything that happened between him and the woman was consensual.

Bauer was never charged with a crime.

The players' association filed a grievance on Bauer's behalf, and a three-man panel headed by Scheinman ruled on Dec. 2. Scheinman concluded that Bauer violated MLB's policy and docked his pay for the first 50 games of 2023, covering part of the period the



Los Angeles Dodgers starting pitcher Trevor Bauer pauses while working against the San Francisco Giants during the fourth inning of a baseball game May 21, 2021, in San Francisco.

Associated Press

pitcher was on paid leave in 2021 and '22.

Bauer joined his hometown Dodgers before the 2021 season and was 8-5 with a 2.59 ERA in 17 starts before being placed on leave.

In February 2022, Los An-

geles prosecutors decided not to charge Bauer for allegedly beating and sexually abusing the San Diego woman because they said they were unable to prove her accusations beyond a reasonable doubt. □

Harvick: 'It's just time,' racer says of 2023 final season

By JENNA FRYER
AP Auto Racing Writer

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP) — Kevin Harvick received the same answer nearly every time he asked another athlete how they decided to retire: Harvick would just know it was time.

The driver thrust onto the global stage when he was named Dale Earnhardt's replacement just days after Earnhardt's fatal 2001 crash will make this 23rd season his last in NASCAR. The 2014 Cup champion heads into his final year tied for ninth on NASCAR's all-time wins list with 60 career victories, 13 consecutive playoff appearances and he's one of the final active drivers from the sport's halcyon days.

"From talking to all the people I've talked to, it always came down to the same, 'Oh, you'll know, you'll know it is time, you'll know the right moment,'" Harvick said in an interview with The Associated Press ahead of his Thursday announcement. "It's great to be able to go out on your own terms and plan it how you want it to go, but the biggest thing that sticks out to me is my kids."

Being home with them and seeing the impact that you have with them when you are home, being able to be part of that daily process and be that father figure, it's just time."

Harvick at the end of this season will turn his attention to Kevin Harvick Inc., his growing management business, the enjoyable time he's spent in the television booth, some bucket list racing, and most important, his young racing family.

Harvick and his wife, DeLana, were adamant they would not raise racers but the slow early days of the COVID-19 pandemic gave father and son too much free time and 10-year-old Keelan is now karting on the international level. The young racer spent part of 2022 racing in Italy — sometimes traveling abroad without either parent — and Harvick figures he saw his son race only three times last year.



Kevin Harvick celebrates after winning the NASCAR Sprint Cup championship series auto race, Sunday, Nov. 16, 2014, in Homestead, Fla.

Associated Press

And then there's Piper, his 5-year-old daughter who now wants Dad's attention when she's in her own go-kart.

"You know, Keelan, he needs that father figure in his life, especially as he goes down the racing route," Harvick told the AP. "And then Piper probably asks to go to the go-kart track more than he does, and having to send her to the track by herself really frustrates me."

"You don't want her not to have the opportunity to learn like he did. She makes twice as many strides in a day while I'm there than she would in a day when I'm not there. So there's just a time when you have to ask yourself 'What's the most important thing for me and my time and my family right now?'"

Harvick had already overcome the NASCAR odds of breaking into the Southern-based sport from Bakersfield, California, when Richard Childress Racing said he'd be a Cup rookie alongside seven-time champion Earnhardt in 2002. But when Earnhardt was killed on the final lap of the 2001 season-opening Daytona 500, Harvick's career was upended.

He was in the rebranded No. 29 Chevrolet five days after Earnhardt's death — less than a week before the 25-year-old's planned wedding to DeLana — and that hectic season in the

spotlight was a blur. Harvick won in his third start, less than a month after Earnhardt's death, and split his time between his new Cup ride and the Busch Series championship he was chasing.

Harvick competed in 69 NASCAR national races that season with a pair of Cup victories and five wins en route to the Busch title. He was busy but grew jaded by all the attention, the endless Earnhardt comparisons, and the pressure of replacing a superstar during a yearlong grieving period that had engulfed NASCAR.

Perhaps that is what made Harvick so tough. He fought with his rivals often in his early career and was suspended for a Cup race in 2002 for his actions in a Truck Series race at Martinsville Speedway a day earlier. That incident forged a relationship between Harvick and the late Jim Hunter, a NASCAR executive who helped Harvick navigate the politics of the sport.

Harvick for days refused to discuss his role in the brawl, only relenting when he finally accepted that son Keelan needed to hear him accept responsibility — even though Harvick had zero remorse.

Harvick doesn't know if his grittiness developed from those first difficult years after Earnhardt's death, but acknowledges an internal

pressure to do things his own way and carve out his own legacy that really ramped up around 2006. Some of Earnhardt's sponsors began pulling off the car and Harvick now had to stand on his own and prove his worth.

"We'd gotten through the tough years of transitioning from what Dale liked to what I liked, and through all those battles and conversations, you put your guard up and become a jerk," Harvick told the AP. "Looking back at it now, you can see that you could have handled things differently, but it was digging my heels in thinking 'I need to do this my way now' and that created some tensions. But I wouldn't trade anything other than Dale's death because all those things that came in the next five years were part of surviving and being successful and building something and learning what was right and what was wrong."

His approach led to strained relationships, including a period with seven-time NASCAR champion Jimmie Johnson. Both had come to North Carolina from California and both crashed on Hall of Famer Ron Hornaday Jr.'s couch as they struggled to make it in NASCAR.

But as Johnson surged to title after title, and Harvick fought through lean years with RCR, the relationship fractured and

Harvick shoved Johnson in the chest following a 2015 playoff race when Johnson tried to speak to him about an on-track incident.

"We've had issues, we've been great, we've had friendship, we've been through it all," Johnson told AP. "I think there's a great deal of respect between both of us. I truly admire his path and what he's overcome. Coming from the West Coast as the starting point, climbing through the ranks, we lose Dale and he's thrust into that position... there's just a lot of layers there and I respect his work ethic and dedication and career."

Harvick, who added a second Busch title in 2006, counts the Daytona 500, Coca-Cola 600, Brickyard 400 and Southern 500 among his crown jewel victories. Harvick also won NASCAR's first race back during the pandemic, held in front of empty grandstands at Darlington Raceway in May 2020, when NASCAR became the first major sport to return to competition.

Harvick told the AP his own handling of the 2013 parting with Richard Childress — in the works for a full year before he moved to Stewart-Haas in 2014 — is the biggest regret of his career and is grateful the relationship is repaired.

He's forged a strong bond at SHR with co-owner Tony Stewart, crew chief Rodney Childers and his entire No. 4 team. Harvick and Childers are currently the longest active driver-crew chief pairing in the Cup Series at 10 years. Among their 37 wins is a pair of victories last season that snapped a 65-race winless streak — the second longest of Harvick's career.

It was Stewart, the three-time Cup champion and Hall of Famer, who encouraged Harvick to make an early announcement about his retirement and enjoy his final year. Stewart shunned all sendoffs and appreciations in his final season, something Harvick told the AP that Stewart now regrets. □